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ABSTRACT

Relying on the social constructionist approach as advanced by Armand L. Mauss (1975), this paper analyzes the construction of a recent U.S. social problem, drug abuse. It is argued that the objective conditions of drug use alone cannot explain why drugs became an issue immediately prior to the 1986 Congressional elections. Explanations for the rise of drug usage as a social problem are to be found primarily in the political realm. Mauss emphasized the similarity between social problems and social movements and defined the five stages of a social problem. This paper examines the extent to which the recently rediscovered drug abuse problem conforms to Mauss' model. Data are based on National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) surveys and the Monitoring the Future project. Data are presented that show the absence of a rise in the overall consumption of illicit drugs during recent years. Public opinion surrounding the issue and the construction of a social problem are traced. The history of this social movement/problem deviated from the Mauss model at two points. It is argued that the Mauss model should be revised for social problems in which governmental agencies and officials are claims-makers. (SM)

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Drug Abuse and Politics:
The Construction of a Social Problem

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Drug Abuse and Politics:
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Introduction

It is now widely accepted by sociologists that any social problem consists of two elements: an objective condition and its constructed definition. The most ardent objectivists will admit that claims-making contributes to the process in which a condition comes to be defined as problematic and worthy of intervention. Likewise, the vast majority of social constructionists will admit that there is usually an observable basis for the claims of activists. What they disagree about is the relative importance of conditions and definitions.

Relying on the social constructionist approach as advanced by Mauss (1975), we analyze in this paper the construction of a recent social problem in the United States: drug abuse. We argue that the "objective" conditions of drug use alone cannot explain why drugs became an issue immediately prior to the 1986 Congressional elections. Explanations for the rise of drugs as a social problem are to be found primarily in the political realm.

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Theoretical Framework

The existence of conditions that are perceived as counterproductive to society has fascinated the public and social scientists throughout history. A particular interest has been to explain the causes of such anti-social behavior. Following functionalist traditions, social scientists have often defined and explained social problems by focusing on the presumed negative consequences of certain behaviors. Various problems are associated with this approach, however. Spector and Kitsuse (1977:23), for instance, argued that the functionalist approach to social problems centers around the identification of "conditions or behaviors that impede the fulfillment of society's goals, that interfere with the smooth functioning of society, or that throw society into disequilibrium." Problems with this approach are ambiguous terminology and a lack of concern with power. Who defines society's goals? What constitutes interference with the "smooth functioning" of society? Who has the power to say so?

Similar problems are associated with normative approaches to social problems. Merton's (1971:799) definition stated that a social problem is "a substantial discrepancy between widely shared social standards and actual conditions of social life." Phrases such as "substantial discrepancy" or "widely shared social standards" are so vague as to be almost meaningless. The issue of how many people must agree that a condition is problematic for it to be "widely shared," is unlikely to be resolved in a satisfactory manner. Likewise, does it matter who these people are? While some of these problems can be

overcome by carefully defining one's terms, it is likely that most of these efforts will involve at least some arbitrariness. In response, a number of sociologists have recently turned their attention away from actual conditions and have instead addressed the process by which these conditions come to be seen as social problems.

One of the earliest attempts to go beyond objective conditions of social problems can be found in the classic essay by Fuller and Myers (1941) on the natural history of social problems. While believing that objective conditions are necessary they stated that, "social problems are what people think they are and if conditions are not defined as social problems by the people involved in them, they are not problems to those people, although they may be problems to outsiders or to scientists" (1941:320 - italics in original). While their approach was limited by an elitist assumption that scientists could better decide what a social problem is than "the people involved in them," it did represent a significant advance over previous objectivist theories. Even though their approach fell short of revolutionizing the study of social problems, Fuller and Myers pointed to a new direction for scholars to pursue.

Becker (1963; 1966) contributed to this tradition by emphasizing the relative nature of both deviance and social problems. Perhaps his most significant contribution was the insight that in order to understand deviance (or social problems) one should study not only deviants but also the people who create and enforce rules (i.e., moral entrepreneurs).

While Blumer (1971) also contributed to the social

constructionist perspective, the next major contributions were made by Spector and Kitsuse (1973; 1977) and Mauss (1975). While there are several differences between their approaches, they share a complete reliance on definitions rather than conditions. Drawing from the insights of Durkheim (1964) and Erikson (1966), Mauss (1975:71) stated that "the incidence and severity of social problems in a society depend, not so much upon objectively 'problematic' conditions, as upon the 'quota' which is logistically possible for a society to manage." Mauss's approach differs from that of Spector and Kitsuse in that he integrated social movements literature into the study of social problems. His approach emphasizes the similarity between social problems and social movements. He argued that social problems are a special kind of movement and thus the terms can be used almost interchangeably (Mauss, 1975; 1984). While we agree in principle with this contention, we will argue that a condition can come to be defined as problematic first and is subsequently followed by a social movement. Mauss implied in his conception of the natural history of social problems that the reverse is the case. Following an established tradition in the study of social movements, Mauss (1975) argued that social problems go through five stages:

> **Incipiency**: In this stage there is neither strong leadership nor an organized membership in the emerging movement. People are concerned with the issue at this stage but no formal organizations exist to champion the cause or to espouse the

ideals of the movement. The response of the society is usually tolerance and co-optation during incipiency. At the same time, potential recruits to the movement are interested in establishing an identity for the movement.

Coalescence: Coalescence is the second stage in the natural history model of a social problem. In this stage Mauss (1975:62) stated "formal and informal organizations develop out of segments of the sympathetic public that have become the most aroused by perceived threats to the preservation or realization of their interests."

Institutionalization: This stage is reached "when the government and other traditional institutions take official notice of a problem or movement and work out a series of standard coping mechanisms to manage it" (Mauss, 1975:63). Institutionalization is marked by a societal-wide organization of groups involved in the problem, lobbying efforts, and attention in the mass media. This is when the movement reaches its peak of success and influence. Government actions adopt movement inspired programs to deal with the problem.

Fragmentation: Fragmentation occurs primarily in response to co-optation in the previous stage. Many members of the movement perceive their goals

to be achieved in the institutionalization stage with the passage of programs supported by the movement to resolve the problem. In addition, the leaders of the movement are often "bought off" during institutionalization. These leaders may be offered government positions in agencies dealing with the problem, campaign for political office, or seek other avenues to achieve new heights of public recognition outside of the movement.

Demise: Demise represents the final stage. With the movement's members losing interest in the issue following co-optive legislation and programs, and since many of the leaders have been "bought off" by the establishment, only a dedicated core of "true believers" is left to carry on the fight. This final vestige of the movement may turn to terrorism or violence to renew interest in the movement.

We examine in this paper the extent to which the recently rediscovered drug abuse problem conforms to this model. In the next section, data will be presented that show the absence of a rise in the overall consumption of illicit drugs during recent years. Following that section, we trace public opinion surrounding the issue and the construction of the social problem. In a concluding section we discuss the implications of the findings for social problems theory.[1]

Trends in Illicit Drug Use

The 1986 War on Drugs seems to be based on the assumption of a sizeable increase in the use/abuse of illicit drugs in recent years. In order to evaluate this assumption, we turn to national self-reports of drug use/abuse. The most comprehensive of the national surveys is produced by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). This self-report study questions nationally representative samples of persons 12 years of age and over. Data are available from this source for selected years through 1985.[2]

Regarding marijuana - the most commonly used illicit drug - the NIDA data show that lifetime, annual and monthly prevalence peaked in 1979 for youth (ages 12-17) and young adults (ages 18-25). Older adults (ages 26 and over) show a different pattern. Monthly and annual use peaked in 1982 for older adults with a slight drop in 1985, whereas lifetime prevalence continued to increase through 1985. This increase in the latter is partially an artifact of the younger groups with higher lifetime prevalence rates simply growing into older adulthood, however. Given the monthly and annual trends we conclude that marijuana use is decreasing in the younger age groups and relatively stable or decreasing among older adults (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1986).

While the focus of publicity in the recent War on Drugs has been cocaine, use of this drug is declining or remaining stable among youth and young adults. Lifetime prevalence rates peaked in 1982 for youth and young adults and declined in 1985. Annual and monthly use have

remained stable since 1979 for youth whereas both peaked in 1979 for young adults and have subsequently declined. Among older adults all three measures continue to increase with monthly use reaching 2.1 percent in 1985 (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1986).

The NIDA survey does contain information which may add objective support to the War on Drugs. In 1985, 21 percent of cocaine users had tried freebase. Due to the rapid onset and short duration of the effects, smoking freebase is considered dangerous and appears to result in more rapid development of dependency on the drug (National Institute on Drug Abuse, n.d.).

Because any conclusions about more recent trends are limited by the years available in the NIDA data set, we turn to information from the Monitoring the Future project. This research is based on a representative sample of all seniors in public and private high schools in the coterminous United States. Self-report data are available each year from 1975 through 1986. In addition to surveying high school seniors, the Monitoring the Future project has followed up representative samples from each graduating class beginning with the Class of 1976. These data do not include information from high school dropouts, of course.[3]

Trends in the lifetime prevalence of any illicit drug use show that from 1975 to 1979 the proportion of high school seniors involved steadily increased (see Table 1). This was primarily due to increases in marijuana use. This trend crested in 1979-1981. Following this peak in use, involvement with any illicit drug gradually declined through 1986. Trends in annual and monthly use are similar to the

lifetime prevalence pattern with the exception of a very small increase in 1985 (Johnston, et al., 1986; The University of Michigan, 1987). Marijuana use followed a similar pattern. Trends in cocaine use are also generally similar but diverged in 1985 when use among high school seniors rose to its highest point. In 1986 all trends in cocaine use declined except daily use which remained stable at 0.4 percent.[4]

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Table 1 about here

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Among post-high school cohorts patterns in the index of any illicit drug use and of marijuana use generally parallel those of the high school seniors (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986:153, 156, 157). The trends in annual cocaine use are mixed by age group among the post-high school cohorts, however. That is, annual prevalence has dropped in some cohorts since 1982, risen in others and has been stable in one. Cocaine use does rise substantially with age in these samples (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986:150 and 159).

In conclusion, these data reveal a picture of decline in the use of illicit drugs since the late 1970s and early 1980s. While cocaine use has experienced small increases among older adults and remains at all-time high levels among high school seniors, these changes do not support the claim of a new crisis in illicit drug use.

Public Opinion and the Drug Issue

One of the tenets of the social constructionist perspective is that moral entrepreneurs or claims-makers influence public opinion in their efforts to create a social problem. Thus it is useful to examine trends in public opinion when tracing the natural history of a social problem. According to Gallup surveys, drug abuse was not seen as a major social problem in the years 1981 through 1984. A summary of the "most important problem" for this time period fails to list drug abuse as a separate category. Presumably it was included in the surveys but is grouped in the category "all others" because of a consistently low concern about it in the polls (The Gallup Report, 1984). Throughout 1985 and in January 1986 still only 2 to 3 percent of the population ranked it as the most important problem. In fact, drug abuse was a distant fourth on the list of "most important problem facing this country" during the week of July 11-14, 1986 (The Gallup Report, 1986). This was prior to President Reagan's declaration of a new war on drugs in early August 1986.

A New York Times/CBS poll conducted during the week of August 18-26, 1986, found that drugs were considered to be the nation's most important problem with 13 percent of the respondents ranking it as such. This represented a substantial increase from the 2 percent who considered drugs the most important problem in a similar poll conducted during April 1986 (Clymer, 1986). Along the same lines, a U.S. News-CNN poll conducted in late August found that "fighting the drug problem" was most often rated as "extremely important" (i.e., 86 percent of the respondents did so). It can be inferred from these two

surveys in August 1986 that drug abuse was one of the most important, if not the most important, social problem in the eyes of the public at that time (U.S. News and World Report, 1986a).

A narrower indicator of public concern with drug abuse is contained in the 1986 Gallup poll of attitudes toward the public schools conducted in April 1986. Reviewing the findings of this survey, Alex Gallup concluded, "For the first time in this survey's 18-year history, the U.S. public has identified drug use by students as the most important problem facing the public schools" (1986:44). While about 30 percent of the respondents ranked drugs as the most important problem confronting the public schools in 1986, only about 20 percent did so between 1982 and 1985 and about 15 percent in 1981 (Gallup, 1986). Thus, it appears that the American public was concerned about drug use/abuse before the war on drugs was launched, but perceptions of it as an important problem were primarily limited to the public schools. It was following a declaration of war that the drug problem was catapulted into national prominence.

Another indicator that can be used to measure public concern over an issue is the amount of coverage an issue receives in the print media. A standard way of doing this is to count citations in The Reader's Guide for Periodical Literature. Table 2 presents the number of articles focusing on illicit drugs that were published between 1975 and 1986.[5] The data show that there was relatively little coverage of drug use/abuse from 1975 to 1977. A review of the articles published during these years indicates that use of marijuana was apparently considered most problematic, while heroin and cocaine were not major

concerns.

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Table 2 about here

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There was a significant increase in the coverage of illicit drugs in the print media starting in 1978 and peaking in 1979 and 1980. Marijuana was still the drug receiving most of the press coverage. However, a number of developments occurred that changed the focus of attention somewhat. A number of well-known individuals were either arrested for possession or sale of drugs, or received attention in conjunction with illicit drugs. Hamilton Jordan, a former member of the Carter administration, was arrested on cocaine charges in 1979. Paul McCartney's marijuana-related arrest in Japan received extensive coverage in the United States in 1980. That same year, Richard Pryor suffered extensive burns in the process of freebasing cocaine. Suspicions that Elvis Presley had died of a drug overdose in 1977 were also renewed in 1980 (Williams, 1980). For a two-year period, therefore, illicit drugs were considered newsworthy and received considerable coverage, at least in part due to the fact that several celebrities became associated with drugs.

While 1981 proved to be a relatively calm year without extensive media coverage of illicit drugs, 1982 signaled another increase in media attention to drugs. Several events were responsible for this trend. Drug use of athletes was covered extensively beginning in

1983. This coverage included the NFL first and then spread to baseball and other sports. The use of steroids, an issue long present in sports, also received considerable attention when 14 athletes were disqualified from the Pan American Games in 1983 (Castro, 1983). Furthermore, the drug-related death of John Belushi received considerable attention in 1982. Another major event in terms of publicity was the arrest and trial of John DeLorean on cocaine charges. As a result of the above events marijuana was no longer the primary drug of concern. An increasing number of articles were being published on the use of cocaine and its consequences.

Nineteen hundred eighty four witnessed more articles published on drugs than any previous year other than 1983. However, it was a relatively calm year compared to what was to come. The use of drugs in major league baseball received extensive coverage during the summer of 1984. Several well-known players such as Vida Blue and Willie Wilson entered treatment programs, events that were well covered by the media. Cocaine had by now replaced marijuana as the drug most often covered in the print media. These trends continued in 1985. Cocaine and the use of drugs by athletes were the two most important concerns but new issues emerged as well. The commissioner of major league baseball announced mandatory drug testing. Drug testing in general was beginning to receive more extensive coverage than in previous years. A few articles were also published on designer drugs.

As can be seen from the above, the emergence of drugs as one of the most important social problems in 1986 did not come as a complete surprise. Drugs had attracted media attention throughout the late

1970s and the first half of the 1980s. More precisely, coverage increased whenever a newsworthy event occurred.[6]

A record number of articles were published on the issue of drug use/abuse during 1986 (see Table 2). Two key factors contributed to an increase in attention toward illicit drugs during the late spring and summer of 1986. First, widespread publicity about crack stimulated public and political concerns over illicit drugs. Crack use was interpreted as an epidemic spreading throughout the major cities of the nation. Second was the cocaine-related deaths of two well known athletes, Len Bias and Don Rogers.

Nancy Reagan's Drug Campaign and the Conservative Movement as Contributing Factors

When President Reagan was elected Nancy Reagan was portrayed by the media as a cold and insensitive person, whose chief concern seemed to be her wardrobe. Because of this portrayal she sought to change her public image. The primary issue she chose to focus on was drug abuse, although she apparently had considered other campaigns (Beck, 1981). While her work with drugs may have been initially little more than a public relations effort, it received extensive media coverage and provided an underpinning for the creation of the drug problem in 1986.

A second factor lies in Blumer's (1951) distinction between "general social movements" and "specific social movements." A general social movement is characterized by public concern over an issue, or a set of issues, without any orchestrated action on behalf of these

concerns. Specific social movements often arise out of general social movements as a result of the formation of interest groups. The 1986 war on drugs can be seen in this context. The end of the last decade and the first half of the 1980s were characterized by a conservative mood both in terms of fiscal and social issues. The election of Ronald Reagan and Republican control of the Senate for six years were perhaps the best indicators of the prevailing political climate. In addition, a number of political issues related to drug use/abuse arose that only a few years earlier were not widely accepted, and some of which would have almost certainly engendered strong opposition. Driving under the influence of alcohol became a major issue beginning in 1982 an crested in 1984. Politicians competed with each other to be seen as the toughest on drunk drivers. Also, a concerted effort was initiated to raise the drinking age to 21 in all states, ostensibly in an attempt to reduce drunk driving. Drug testing has also emerged along with the 1986 war on drugs. Somewhat further removed from drugs, the rights of individuals, defended by conservatives on certain issues, were being challenged by the increasing use of AIDS testing and lie detectors in a variety of settings.

All of these trends provided the basis for the moral entrepreneurs of 1986. It was in this general setting of conservatism that drugs could emerge as a leading social problem. It was also in such a context that the idea of mandatory drug testing for persons in selected occupations would be widely accepted by the public. Only a few years earlier mandatory drug tests and use of lie detectors would

almost certainly have led to strong public and political objections.

The New War on Drugs: 1986

In order to trace the events involved in the social construction of the 1986 war on drugs, we supplemented our review of articles in The Reader's Guide with a review of the index of The New York Times. It is apparent from the newspaper's coverage that concern over crack use received a great deal of attention from mid-May through late June. Beginning in early June, community and church groups in the New York City area staged several vigils and public demonstrations to publicize the spread of crack and related problems. Several more demonstrations were conducted in late July and early August. This activity is an indicator of the beginning of a coalescence stage of the natural history of the new war on drugs.

The June 19 cocaine-related death of Len Bias focused public and media attention on drug abuse among athletes and cocaine abuse in general. An outpouring of newspaper and magazine articles followed his death. On June 27, Don Rogers died and his death was also later linked to cocaine abuse.

These events did not go unnoticed by politicians. On July 9, The New York Times carried a brief news note stating that President Reagan was considering taking the lead from Mrs. Reagan and launching an anti-drug campaign (July 9, II, 5:1). Two days later another article appeared in the same newspaper indicating that the President would start an anti-drug drive soon (July 11, I, 10:4). On July 23, House Speaker Thomas O'Neill and other Democratic leaders announced a

bipartisan effort to combat illicit drugs which received front page coverage in the Times (July 24, I, 1:3). Within days, the Times carried a story on who really took the anti-drug initiative: Nancy Reagan, House Democrats, or President Reagan (July 29, I, 1:3). The political football game had begun. On August 1, Democratic leaders beat President Reagan to the punch and outlined a major anti-drug bill (August 2, I, 1:2). President Reagan followed this legislative initiative a few days later by announcing his new anti-drug drive and calling for mandatory drug tests for federal workers in sensitive positions (August 5, I, 24:1). Republican leaders then jumped into the fray and pressured the President to seize the drug issue before the Democrats could make it their own (August 8, I, 1:6; August 10, I, 1:2).

By mid-to-late August the drug issue had swept the nation. Polls showed it to be one of the most important problems in the nation whereas only months before it received only a few percentage points in these surveys. As summer turned to fall it was apparent that drugs had become a major campaign issue with both Republicans and Democrats maneuvering to gain political mileage from this wholesome, safe issue (September 9, I, 1:4; September 10, I, 19:1; October 23, II, 12:1). On September 11, the House passed by an overwhelming vote of 392 to 16 its version of an anti-drug bill. Three days later President and Mrs. Reagan made an unprecedented joint television address to the nation on the drug problem. On September 15, President Reagan presented his bill to Congress (September 16, I, 1:5). After a month of debate on the specifics of the bill, on October 17 the Senate passed a $ 1.7

billion compromise drug bill and President Reagan signed it into law on October 28.

In a matter of months a social problem had been constructed and reached the institutionalization stage with the enactment of federal legislation. By December press coverage of the "new" drug problem had diminished substantially (see Table 3).

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Table 3 about here

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Theoretical Implications

We set out to analyze the emergence of a social problem/movement by utilizing the model developed by Mauss (1975). We were interested in explaining an apparent discrepancy between public and political fervor over the drug issue in 1986, and objective data that indicated no significant increases in the consumption of illicit drugs. What we found was support for this model, albeit with important modifications.

It is clear from the the history of this problem that an incipiency stage of a social movement/problem existed for the new war on drugs. From the review of articles in The Reader's Guide concern with the issue increased in 1979 and 1980 with the arrests of Hamilton Jordan and Paul McCartney, the disastrous experience of Richard Pryor with freebasing, and suspicions that the death of Elvis Presley was linked to a drug overdose. Media attention to drugs again increased

in 1982 and 1983 with coverage of drug use among professional athletes, steroid use among amateur athletes, the death of John Belushi, and the arrest and trial of John DeLorean. At this time drug coverage increasingly turned from marijuana to cocaine. Drugs and athletes continued to be big news in 1984 and 1985, with a twelve year high of print media coverage on drugs in 1986 associated with the new war on drugs and related events.

Publicity surrounding crack and the cocaine related deaths of Len Bias and Don Rogers spurred renewed interest in the drug issue during mid-May and June 1986. Evidence of the coalescence stage is found at this time in the emergence of interest group efforts to publicize and combat crack use in New York City. The coalescence stage did not fully develop as proposed by Mauss (1975), however. The groups that were forming and responding to the crack "epidemic" remained localized and rather ineffectual. Instead of a wave of new grassroots organizations or existing voluntary associations championing the problem, politicians gathered around the issue only months before the 1986 Congressional elections. A new war on drugs was their answer to a lackluster campaign season. Proposals for tax reform were attracting little voter support and President Reagan was "trapped in a thicket of thorny problems, not the least of which were budget and trade deficits and sanctions against South Africa" (U.S. News and World Report, Sept. 29, 1986:28). Drugs were a safe issue for incumbent politicians who wanted to take the "moral high road" on an issue (see Newsweek, August 11, 1986; U.S. News and World Report, September 8, 1986: September 29, 1986).

The natural history of this social movement/problem jumped from the beginnings of a coalescence stage directly into an early part of the institutionalization stage with the July 23 announcement by Congressional Democrats of a bipartisan effort to pass legislation to combat drug abuse and a proposed anti-drug bill on August 1. Entry into the institutionalization stage was reaffirmed when President Reagan announced his anti-drug effort a few days later. Institutionalization was mounting in mid-September when the House overwhelmingly passed its version of the anti-drug bill, and President and Mrs. Reagan -- a recent moral entrepreneur -- made their joint televised address to the nation. Institutionalization culminated in mid-October when the drug bill was passed and signed into law by the President, only two weeks before the elections.

The history of this social problem further deviated from the Mauss model at this point in its development. Politicians, who to some extent had "created" the problem, needed public support for their positions. All of the actions described above thus served two functions: on one hand they represented the institutionalization stage (by definition), but on the other they served as mechanisms to attract public support. While the Mauss model predicts the intensification of public concern first (coalescence), which is then followed by official recognition, we would suggest that this social problem was institutionalized <u>before</u> public concern went beyond the stage of incipiency. Support for this contention can be found in the fact that public concern over the drug issue, as measured in opinion polls, escalated <u>after</u> politicians promoted it.

Our argument is not entirely novel. Chauncey (1980), for instance, studied the efforts of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) against teenage drinking. He concluded that the objective conditions of teenage drinking were not nearly as serious as NIAAA maintained. Instead, he argued, the social problem was "created" by NIAAA for organizational reasons, and public support was subsequently sought in an effort to legitimate NIAAA's claims.

Randall and Short (1983), studying the involvement of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in a controversy surrounding a company's decision to prevent fertile female employees from occupying certain positions with lead exposure, also found support for this type of model. When OSHA became involved in the controversy, it extended, by definition, official recognition to the problem. OSHA then initiated a campaign designed to legitimate its claims. Similarly, Gerber (1984; Gerber and Short, 1986) studied the rise, institutionalization, and fall of the social problem concerning the marketing and selling of infant formula in less developed countries. While there were numerous grassroots organizations that applied pressure on corporations (e.g., by organizing a boycott of Nestle products), governmental and quasi-governmental agencies (e.g., The World Health Organization) were involved in the process of claims-making from the very beginning. Here again the social problem did not advance through the stages in the sequence Mauss predicted. While there was an incipiency, the stages of coalescence and institutionalization were meshed together, with the latter actually preceding coalescence in some ways.

We argue in light of the present study and studies cited above that the Mauss model should be revised for those social problems in which governmental agencies and officials are claims-makers. Drawing from Randall and Short's (1983) revision of the Spector and Kitsuse (1977) model, we propose the following revision of the Mauss (1975) natural history model of social problems/movements:

> **Incipiency**: In this stage there is neither strong leadership nor an organized membership in the emerging movement. People are concerned with the issue at this stage but no formal organizations exist to champion the cause or to espouse the ideals of the movement. The response of the society is usually tolerance and co-optation during incipiency. At the same time, potential recruits to the movement are interested in establishing an identity for the movement.
>
> **Coalescence**: A stage of coalescence may or may not occur. If it does, "formal and informal organizations develop out of segments of the sympathetic public that have become the most aroused by perceived threats to the preservation or realization of their interests" (Mauss, 1975:62).
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> **Creation**: "A government agency may assert the existence of a condition, define the condition as undesirable, assert the legitimacy of its claims, investigate those claims, and propose a remedy for the perceived

undesirable condition" (Randall and Short, 1983:421).

Legitimation: "By publicizing its claims, a government agency may seek to create controversy over those claims, and to generate public support for its position. The agency must also establish the legitimacy of its mandate regarding both claims and solutions which are favorable to its interests" (Randall and Short, 1983:421).

What followed the legitimation of the social problem was somewhat of a fragmentation of this short-lived politically induced movement.[7] This disintegration also does not fit the Mauss model since the stage of coalescence was largely passed over and there were no well-established interest groups to fragment. Since politicians had achieved their election season goals of championing a safe issue, most of them no longer had a stake in the drug issue. It appears that the public fervor they spawned over the drug problem carries on to some extent, however (The Gallup Report, 1987).

It would be premature, though, to complete a revision of the Mauss model at this time. It remains to be seen if the drug issue does indeed fade away as we anticipate, or if it will be revived by a concerned public or other collectivities with an interest at stake in the issue. It is our hope that researchers will continue to monitor the drug issue. Perhaps in a few years someone will be able to chronicle its demise and, thus, complete this research.

Footnotes

[1] It should be emphasized that this paper only tests the model developed by Mauss (1975) and not the entire constructionist approach to social problems. For discussions of other models see Schneider (1985) and Schneider and Kitsuse (1984).

[2] The NIDA survey was conducted in 1972, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1982, and 1985 (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1986).

[3] See Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman (1986) for a discussion of the problems associated with the exclusion of high school dropouts from these surveys.

[4] The high school senior survey also contains some initial descriptive data on the use of crack. A little over 4 percent of the respondents had used crack in the year prior to the 1986 survey. Crack users are demographically similar to users of powdered cocaine but the crack user is even more concentrated among non-college-bound students. Crack appears to be available throughout the country but use is higher in urban areas and in the Northeastern and Western regions (The University of Michigan, 1987).

[5] All articles cited in The Reader's Guide dealing with the use of illicit drugs were recorded. As is often the case in such studies, articles dealing with a certain subject are indexed under a relatively small number of keywords if the issue is not covered extensively. However, once the issue becomes popular, an increasing number of articles are published and they are indexed under more specific keywords. We identified all relevant keywords and then recorded the articles. The list of keywords that were eventually used would be too extensive to reprint here. Interested researchers can contact the authors and a list will be provided.

[6] See Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986) for a discussion of press coverage of social movements.

[7] We are well aware that drug use and abuse are issues that appear and then disappear from public view periodically. An excellent study that documented these "cycles of social problem development" as they apply to drug abuse was conducted by Peyrot (1984). While the 1986 war on drugs could be seen in the context of these cycles, it seems to us that what happened that year was not part of a long-term struggle "within and between groups advocating criminal justice and clinical approaches" to dealing with consumers of illicit drugs (Peyrot, 1984:92). Instead, we see it as an election issue more or less independent from such long-term efforts to deal with drug users and abusers. It is for this reason that we chose to focus primarily on constructionist literature to social problems.

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Table 1
Trends in Lifetime, Annual, Monthly, and Daily Use of Illicit Drugs by Graduating High School Seniors

	Class of 1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986[a]
	% Reporting Use in Lifetime											
DI[b]	55.2	58.3	61.6	64.1	65.1	65.4	65.6	**64.4**	**62.9**	**61.6**	**60.6**	**58.0**
Marij.	47.3	52.8	56.4	59.2	60.4	60.3	59.5	58.7	57.0	54.9	54.2	50.9
Coca.	9.0	9.7	10.8	12.9	15.4	15.7	16.5	16.0	16.2	16.1	17.3	16.9
	% Reporting Use in Last Twelve Months											
DI[b]	45.0	48.1	51.1	53.8	54.2	53.1	52.1	**49.4**	**47.4**	**45.8**	**46.3**	**N.A.**
Marij.	40.0	44.5	47.6	50.2	50.8	48.8	46.1	44.3	42.3	40.0	40.6	38.8
Coca.	5.6	6.0	7.2	9.0	12.0	12.3	12.4	11.5	11.4	11.6	13.1	12.7
	% Reporting Use in Last 30 Days											
DI[b]	30.7	34.2	37.6	38.9	38.9	37.2	36.9	**32.5**	**30.5**	**29.2**	**29.7**	**27.0**
Marij.	27.1	32.2	35.4	37.1	36.5	33.7	31.6	28.5	27.0	25.2	25.7	23.4
Coca.	1.9	2.0	2.9	3.9	5.7	5.2	5.8	5.0	4.9	5.8	6.7	6.2
	% Reporting Daily Use in Last 30 Days											
Marij.	6.0	8.2	9.1	10.7	10.3	9.1	7.0	6.3	5.5	5.0	4.9	4.0
Coca.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4

Sources: Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman (1986:42, 43, 44, 45 and 47); The University of Michigan (1987).

Notes: [a] Data for 1986 represent estimated percentages. Figures in **boldface** are based on the revised version.

[b] DI stands for an Index of Illicit Drug Use or Drug Index. Drugs included in this index are marijuana, hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin, or use of any other opiates, stimulants, sedatives, or tranquilizers not under a physician's orders.

Table 2
Number of Articles Indexed in The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature Concerning the Use and Abuse of Illicit Drugs

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Sports[a]	1	1	0	4	6	6	4	32	115	65	94	72
Abuse[b]	40	29	38	57	99	98	65	102	97	83	99	198
Totals	41	30	38	61	105	104	69	134	212	148	193	270

Source: The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, 1975-1986.

Notes: [a] This row includes all articles indexed in The Readers Guide that deal with the use and abuse of illicit drugs by athletes.
[b] This row includes all other articles indexed in The Readers Guide that deal with the use and abuse of illicit drugs.

Table 3
Number of Articles Indexed in 1986 in The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature Concerning the Use and Abuse of Illicit Drugs, by Month of Publication

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Totals
Sports	4	11	11	6	4	5	13	8	3	4	2	1	72
Abuse	4	6	19	11	7	20	14	25	27	25	24	16	198
Combined	8	17	30	17	11	25	27	33	30	29	26	17	270

Source: The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, 1986.